

Accenting AquaStretch™: Putting the exclamation point on intuitive movement!

Beth Scalone, PT, DPT, OCS, ATRIC, AquaStretch™ trainer.

One of the basic tenants of AquaStretch™ is that the water provides a supportive environment allowing the client to move freely. Further the client is encouraged to move intuitively listening to their body instead of performing a scripted set of movements. The facilitator has the ability to change the intensity of a fascial stretch through; the application of weights, changing depth of water, altering the amount of direct pressure and by accenting the client's intuitive movement. As an intermediate skill accentuating intuitive movement requires practice.

When facilitators are first learning AquaStretch™ it is essential they develop the ability to follow the client's intuitive movement. Developing a sense or feel when the client's movement changes direction or pauses for a static stretch enhances the results of AquaStretch™. Wearing water shoes to improve traction, applying a weight belt to improve stability and remembering to stand tall in the water are three ways the facilitator can augment their ability to follow a client's movement. However, even with taking those steps, performing One Leg Stand can still resemble alligator wrestling.

Closing the eyes is one method employed removing the anticipation of where or how the client might move and forces the facilitator to sense changes through their hands. Following not leading intuitive movement is a skill requiring practice. When the client let's go and moves intuitively and the facilitator follows this movement without inhibition, AquaStretch™ is the most successful in releasing adhesions.

At times the client does not have the strength or endurance to go far enough into the end range for an adhesion to release. This is when accentuation of the intuitive movement by the facilitator is appropriate. Because the client moves in many directions, the question becomes what direction is the accentuation needed? To answer that question requires observing the client's movement.

First what is the vector of the movement the client 'freezes' in during the 4 step procedure of Play Freeze Pressure Move? Often this is the direction the facilitator will need to accentuate to enable the release of the adhesions. Thinking about the direction of force needed for accentuation assists the facilitator in determining hand placement during this four step process.

Second what is the speed at which the client approaches their end range? If the client has a repeated, rapid, jerking motion in one direction, at end range, their body may be trying to accentuate this motion directly. The facilitator can now follow the movement to the end point and provide the necessary extra push to achieve a release. Keep in mind motions and directions are not usually straight plane movements, and the facilitator should be mindful of rotation.

A third mechanism to deliver accentuation, increasing the intensity of the fascial stretch, is traction. With one leg stand we start by applying foot grip with traction to facilitate intuitive movement. Providing limb distraction, whenever possible during the pressure and move phase of the four step process, often expedites a soft tissue release.

Effective application of accentuation involves first developing the skill of following intuitive movement and secondly, understating what the client's intuitive movement can tell the facilitator. Remember accentuation is nothing more than putting the exclamation point on intuitive movement.